consumers was fulfilled. The quality of coal supply has also shown progressive improvement due to several steps undertaken to improve the quality.

(c) Does not arise.

(d) The steps taken to improve coal supplies are as follows:—

(1) Close coordination is being maintained with Railways on a day-today basis to ensure steady supply of coal to different sectors.

(2) The stock level in various power houses are being monitored closely on a day-to-day basis.

(3) The coal supply by different modes such as rail, road, MGR Belt rope Ways etc. are regulated through a well laid out and transparent system.

In order to improve coal quality, the following steps have been taken;

(i) Installation of CHPs and feeder breakers to eliminate complaints of oversized coal.

(ii) Installation of Electronic weighbridges.

(iii) Posting of one executive at each siding responsible for loading of good quality coal.

(iv) Benching in opencast mines.

(v) Selective blasting for fragmentation of coal.

(vi) Sampling/analysis of coal despatched by Public Analyst.

(vii) Joint sampling by major consumers like cement, fertiliser, loco and steel is made at loading end to assess the quality of despatches.

Use of Chinese "Long-Wall" Technology in undesground mines

26. SHRI RAMDAS AGARWAL: Will the Minister of COAL be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the newsitem published in the 'Financial Express' dated the 9th July, 1994 that the Coal India Limited, Neyveli Lignite Corporation Limited, Singrauli Coal Complex are going to use Chinese "Long-Wall" technology to increase safety conditions in their underground mines;

(b) if so, the details thereof indicating whether the Centre has sanctioned the above project;

(c) whether the country expects to produce around 550 million tonnes of coal in the next century which would liable it to comrete against coontries like Australia, Indonesia and South Africa; and

(d) if so, the details therof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF COAL (SHRI AJIT KUMAR PANJA): (a) Arising from bilateral discussions held with Chinese authorities during January last, China have offered for supply of longwall equipment alongwith technology of management of hard roof conditions in some of the underground mines of Coal India Limited and Singareni Collieries Company Ltd. The technology offered aims at increasing coal production and safety standards in such underground mines.

(b) Government have approved import of two packages of longwall equipment from China for Padmavati Khani underground Project of Singareni Collieries Co. Ltd.

(c) and (d) Tentative estimates of energy demand scenario indicate the coal demand in the country in the year 2010 AD as 550 million tonnes per annum.

Abolition of compulsory pre-shipment inspection of export products

27. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to abolish compulsory pre-shipment inspection of export products;

(b) if so, the reasons thereof;

(c) whether it is also a fact that this decision is likely to throw out of employment person engaged in preshipment inspection and laxity in quality of export products; and

(d) if so, what steps are being contemplated to ensure quality of export products and employment to those affected by this decision?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) No, Sir.

(b) Does not arise.

(c) and (d) Although Compulsory Pre-shipment Inspection has not been abolished and 986 items are at present under the purview of Compulsory Preshipment Inspection, the existing machinery for enforcement of compulsory quality control and pre-shipment inspection has been simplified and streamlined by taking the following steps:

(i) Star trading houses, trading houses and export houses have been exempted from the purview of compulsory pre-shipment inspection of all products notified under the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963.

(ii) Units aproved by the EIAs under the System of In-Process Quality Control (IPQC) have been authorised to issue statutory certificates by themselves instead of Export Inspection Agencies.

(iii) Industrial units set up in EPZ|FTZ and 100 per cent EOUs have been exempted from the purview of compulsory pre-shipment inspection.

(iv) Items notified under the Export (Quality Control and Inspection) Act, 1963 have also been exempted from compulsory pre-shipment inspection provided the exporters have a firm letter from the overseas buyers stating that they do not want pre-shipment inspection from any official Indian Inspection Agencies.

(v) Manufacturers|exporters of engineering products and fish and fishery products, who have attained export orders of these products on an average level of Rs. 1.5 crores during the last three years and have not received any quality complraint from foreign buyers, and are competent to carry out pre-shipment inspection, will be recognised as inspection agencies for their own products.

The above measures have been introduced as a part of Government's overall policy of liberalisation and simplification.

As a result of the liberalisation measures, the workload of the offices of the EIA has got reduced, resulting in the existing manpower becoming surplus to the requirement. A Voluntary Retirement Scheme has, therefore, been introduced on 21.5.1994 for the employees of the EIC|EIAs. So far over 815 employees are reported to have opted for the Voluntary Retirement Scheme.

The liberalisation measures have been part of the continuous process over the years. These measures have helped manufacturers and exporters in avoiding delay, matching production and shipment schedules and quoting competitive dates to the foreign buyers. Further, since the facility for self-certification and In-Process Quality Control can be withdrawn by the EIAs, the manufacturers have, at the same time, to continue to maintain the requisite quality

standards, EIAs are also extending their technical expertise to manufacturers and exporters for enabling them to upgrade their quality in conformity with international standards It is not, therefore, a fact that the measures have led to laxity in quality of export products.

Discussions for trade with Russia

28. SHRI JANARDHANA POOJARY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether discussions have been held with the Russians in the first week of July, 1994 regarding trade with that country and if so, what are the details thereof; and

(b) what is the outcome thereof?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) During Prime Minister's visit to Moscow from 29 June to 2 July, 1994, 11 documents were signed. These include two declarations on the protection of interests of pluarlistic states and on further development and intensification of bilateral cooperation. Apart from these, 9 other agrtements and protocols were signed on cooperation in tourism, environment, space, information technology, meteorology, science and technology standardisation, extension of the 1992 defence credit agreement and agreement on setting up of a joint venture in military aviation.

A number of important decisions on bilateral trade matters were also taken during the visit. The Russian side conveyed that they were taking a series of steps to facilitate export of goods from India on the debt repayment route. It was also decided that a three year perspective plan for the import of tea, tobacco, soyameal, leather and pharmaceuticals from India would be worked out to ensure greater predictability and continuity with regard to export of these items.

It was decided that the bilateral Joint Commission which would hold its first meeting in Moscow in September will be the forum for monitoring economic, trade and cultural exchanges. The working groups under the Joint Commission will have separate meetings before its plenary session in September.

Multinationals in tea market

29. SHRI KRISHAN LAL SHARMA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government popose to open domestic tea market to foreign multinationals;

(b) whether it is also a fact that this is likely to adversely affect the production of quality tea in the country; and

(c) if so, what steps are being contemplated to protect the interest of domestic tea industry in view of lag in exports and to maintain its good quality?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE (SHRI PRANAB MUKHERJEE): (a) and (b) Multinational companies have long since been operating in the Indian tea market. These companies operate within the policy framework of the Government which is directed towards all round development of tea industry with particular emphasis on increasing production and maintaining the distinct quality of Indian tea.

(c) In order to boost exports of Indian tea, a number of steps are being taken by the Tea Board which include uninational campaign for Indian tea organising trade delegations/buyer-seller meets, various overseas promotional demonstrations & media publicity etc. Tea Board has always been emphasising on maintaining the quality of Indian tea and permits use of its logo only to pure Indian varieties.